

certain if France thinks she is stronger and can win. That is my unalterable conviction. Where is the Ministry who would dare to say, We accept the Treaty of Frankfurt? She is definitely stronger than she was. If she won, she would bleed us white; and if we won, after being attacked, we would do the same. There is also the possibility, even if France did not expect to win, that she might launch a war as a safety valve, as in 1870. Indeed, why should not Boulanger try it if he came to power?

On January 28 the Chancellor observed to Herbette that Boulanger's promotion to the Premiership or the Presidency would mean war. "C'est un homme qui medite un coup d'etat,"¹⁵ though he was only a second-rate comedian. On January 31 the *Post*, in an article entitled "On the razor-edge," which recalled the scare of 1875, argued that the retention of Boulanger in the Ministry was an imminent danger to peace.

The Reichstag accepted the proposed increase for three years instead of seven, as demanded by the Bill, and the Government appealed to the country. Boulanger, it was argued, was organizing the *revanche*. Pictures appeared of the Vosges frontier with huge barracks and swarming *poilus* on the one side and not a soldier on the other. To ensure the desired response by emphasizing the danger, the Government announced the calling up of reservists in Alsace-Lorraine. The atmosphere was electric, and war was anticipated by cool observers in other lands. Flourens, the Foreign Minister, was thoroughly alarmed. On February 8 the French Chamber adopted without discussion Boulanger's demand for a special credit of eighty million francs, though the frightened Cabinet vetoed the proposal for calling up reservists. Miinster in-formally urged his dismissal, and the German semi-official

journal observed that not a day had passed since his appointment to the Ministry of War without a measure to increase the striking power of the French army. Once more, as in 1875, the Tsar was asked for and gave a promise of moral support. The German elections supplied the Government with the majority it needed, and the Army Bill in the desired shape became law in March.

With the passing of the Septennate there was a lull in its official German campaign against the French peril, but the psychological results remained. " Bismarck's electoral manoeuvre," reported Herbette, " has been so well engineered that all Germany now believes in the fatality of a war with France and is inclined to wish to get it over at once. This